

HANDOUT 3.4: LEVELS OF STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Levels of Stakeholder Involvement

Merely identifying stakeholders is not sufficient to ensure that they will be involved in the coastal resource planning process. Participation means taking part in an activity. True participation requires that the local community has some authority in the management of coastal resources and that the community concerns are incorporated in the planning process for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Participation leads to empowerment as community members learn about resource management issues and are involved in finding and implementing solutions to coastal resource issues in their communities. There is a continuum of public involvement in the MPA planning process that is reflected in the typology of participation in the table on the following page.

Participation is a learned skill on the part of individual community members and depends on their ability to confidently articulate their concerns and visions and take an active role in MPA efforts. The true level of participation also depends on the ability of community members to negotiate with the political and economic interests involved and the political will of the government to act in the long-term interest of the people.

The community organizer (CO) is a person who can work with local community members to increase their capacity to actively participate while not detracting from the community role in any manner; the LGU or NGO can assist the community in identifying an appropriately trained individual to serve as the CO in the community.

An analysis of individuals, groups, and institutions that can influence plan success should be conducted to determine the best approach to involve them in the MPA planning process. This should include an evaluation of:

- Characteristics of the individual or group (religious, cultural, and economic factors);
- Position of the individual or group (status, function, organizational structure);
- Current situation of the individual or group and the problems they face;
- Strengths and weaknesses of the individual or group (knowledge, commitment, ownership, dependence);
- Interests, needs, goals of the individual or group;
- Expectations and fears of the individual or group;
- Capabilities and skills of the individual or group;
- Availability of resources of group or institution; and
- Goals and mandates of the institution or organization in relation to coastal resource issues.

Typology of participation (from IIRR 1998)

Typology	Description
1. Passive participation	People participate by being told what is going to happen or has happened. It is a unilateral announcement by the administration or project manager, without listening to people's responses.
2. Participation by information giving	People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings.
3. Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted, and external agents listen to their views. Such a consultative process does not usually concede any share in decision-making.
4. Participation for material incentives	People participate by providing resources, such as labor or information, in return for food, cash, or other material incentives.
5. Functional participation	People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement often occurs after major decisions have been made. These groups tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators.
6. Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
7. Self-mobilization	People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used.

Throughout the MPA process it is important to assess the level of participation. At what stages in the process are people participating? Who is participating- is it just the community leaders or are many individuals involved? To what extent does an individual in the community have control over decisions related to MPA? Finally are there significant political, social, or administrative obstacles to successful participation? (IIRR 1998)

With no leadership or commitment to effect change, existing conditions will remain, or more likely, get worse over time. A strong commitment to change existing conditions, understanding of the problem, and leadership are required to help communities initiate the process required to change their situation. Making the decision to go down the path towards better coastal management takes energy, hard work, and time but will lead to improved condition. Communities need to envision a better future, become organized, participate in planning and implementation, and have a higher awareness of environmental issues.

Source: The Philippine Coastal Management Guidebook No. 4, Involving Communities in Coastal Management, 2001; Managing Marine Protected Areas: A TOOLKIT for the Western Indian Ocean. 7-8 pp.